

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached "Replacement Sheets" of drawings include changes to Figures 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. The attached "Replacement Sheets," which include Figures 1-6, replace the original sheets including Figures 1-8.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS

Claims 1-11, 13-15, 17-25 and 40 are now pending in the application. Minor amendments have been made to the specification for purposes of clarification. The amendments to the claims contained herein are of equivalent scope as originally filed and, thus, are not a narrowing amendment. The basis for the amendment and support for the new claims can be found throughout the application, claims and drawings as originally filed and as such no new matter has been presented. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

DRAWINGS

Applicants have attached revised drawings for the Examiner's approval. In the "Replacement Sheets" the drawings have been amended to more clearly disclose the invention. Original Figures 2 and 3 have been deleted as they did not accurately depict the invention. Figures 4-8 have been renumbered as Figures 2-6 and new Figures 2 and 3 have been amended to more accurately depict the cross-sectional views they depict. Support for the modifications can be found in the specification and therefore do not constitute new matter.

SPECIFICATION

Applicants have amended the specification for purposes of clarification. No new matter has been added. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to accept these changes.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 AND 103

Claims 1-4, 7-11, 14, 17-19, 21, 22 and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Creavey (U.S. Pat. No. 3,033,582, hereinafter "Creavey"). Claims 17 and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Jackson (U.S. Pat. No. 2,513,178, hereinafter "Jackson"). Claims 15 and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Creavey. Claims 5, 6, 13, and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Creavey in view of Combet et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,390,479, hereinafter "Combet"). Claim 20 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Creavey in view of Lucas et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 4,635,949, hereinafter "Lucas"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

At the outset, Applicants note that claims 1, 10 and 17 have been amended to include the distinction of the stopper member(s) being formed independent of the carrier. Creavey appears to have stopper members (15, 16) generally extending from what the Examiner considers to be the carrier (11). However, the stopper members in Creavey are integral to the carrier (11). Thus, the material that the stopper is formed from is formed integral from the same material as the carrier. Therefore, Applicants believe that claims 1, 10 and 17 as amended distinguish from Creavey.

Applicants note that claims 2-9, 13-15 and 18-25 and 40 depend from claims 1, 10 and 17 respectively, and should be in condition for allowance for the reasons set forth above regarding claims 1, 10 and 17. In view of the above comments and the amendment to the independent claims, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-11, 13-15, 17-25 and 40 as amended.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600 or Ronald W. Wangerow at (734) 354-5445.

Respectfully submitted,

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